

DESCRIPTION OF THE CALIFORNIA BAR EXAMINATION AND FIRST-YEAR LAW STUDENTS' EXAMINATION TO ASSIST TESTING ACCOMMODATION SPECIALISTS

California Bar Examination

The following is a description of the California Bar Examination that should assist an applicant's examiner/diagnostician in recommending testing accommodations for the applicant.

Achieving a passing score on the California Bar Examination is one of the requirements for admission to practice law in California. The examination is of three days' duration, unless applicants receive extended time through the petition process, and is administered at test centers throughout California. Most applicants take the examination in large halls that can accommodate 50-1500 applicants. Applicants are seated at eight foot tables (two applicants per table). Under regular testing conditions, applicants are not allowed to leave the designated secured examination area while the examination is in session. They are also not allowed to bring food, beverages, personal items into the examination area. Applicants are permitted to leave their seats to use the rest room or to take short breaks, although the timing of the examination continues. Applicants may elect to type or handwrite the examination. Personal computers are not allowed; however, applicants may use typewriters and wordprocessors that conform with Committee of Bar Examiners' (Committee) requirements.

The first day of the examination consists of a three-hour morning session during which applicants are asked to answer three essay questions. The essay question booklet usually consists of approximately 200-250 lines of printed text, including the instructions. On average, an essay question answer runs from 5-7 pages of single spaced, handwritten text on standard lined composition paper. Applicants are given a 1½ hour lunch break and then must return for another three-hour session in the afternoon, during which they complete a written performance test. The performance test is designed to evaluate the applicant's ability to understand and apply a select number of legal authorities in the context of a factual problem. It is graded on the applicant's responsiveness to instructions and on the content, thoroughness, organization, and persuasiveness of written tasks. The applicant must review a Committee prepared file and library for completion of this task. As an example, one performance test consisted of a booklet containing approximately 290 lines of printed text for the instructions and a file, and another booklet containing approximately 400 lines of printed text for the library materials. A performance test answer typically runs 11-14 pages of single spaced, handwritten text on standard lined composition paper.

On the second day, the Multistate Bar Examination (MBE), which is given on the same day in most United States jurisdictions, is administered to general applicants. There is a three-hour morning session and a three-hour afternoon session during which applicants are expected to answer 200 multiple-choice questions (100 each session) using a Scantron sheet that requires them to blacken a circle to designate their answer. There is a 1½ hour lunch break between sessions.

Applicants admitted as attorneys in other states for four years or more who qualify as attorney applicants for the Attorneys' Examination may elect to take the Attorneys' Examination, which consists of the written portions (essays and performance tests) administered on the first and third days of the general bar examination.

The applicant and his/her examiner/diagnostician should request the accommodation they believe is necessary to assist the applicant in taking the examination on an equal basis with all other applicants, with particular attention to the different formats of the examination (essay, performance test, MBE).

First-Year Law Students' Examination

The following is a description of the First-Year Law Students' Examination that should assist an applicant's examiner/diagnostician in recommending testing accommodations for the applicant.

The First-Year Law Students' Examination is a one-day examination that consists of a four-hour morning session during which applicants answer four essay questions, and a three-hour afternoon session during which applicants are expected to answer 100 multiple-choice questions using a Scantron sheet that requires them to blacken a circle to designate their answer. The essay question booklet usually consists of approximately 100-130 lines of printed text, including the instructions. On average, an essay question answer runs from 5-7 pages of single spaced, handwritten text on standard lined composition paper. The multiple-choice questions usually run from 10-45 lines of printed text, including instructions.

The examination is administered at test centers located in the San Francisco and Los Angeles areas. Most applicants take the examination in large halls that can accommodate 150-400 applicants. Applicants are seated at eight foot tables (two applicants per table). Under regular testing conditions, applicants are not allowed to leave the designated secured examination area while the examination is in session. They are also not allowed to bring food, beverages, personal items into the examination area. Applicants are allowed to leave their seats to use the rest room or to take short breaks, although the timing of the examination continues. Applicants may elect to type or handwrite the examination. Personal computers are not allowed; however, applicants may use typewriters and wordprocessors that conform with Committee requirements.

The applicant and his/her examiner/diagnostician should request the accommodation they believe is necessary to assist the applicant in taking the examination on an equal basis with all other applicants, with particular attention to the different formats of the examination (essay and multiple-choice).